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ABSTRACT

This state master plan provides a structure to facilitate the development of an appropriate and effective education system for all students in Utah, including those at risk of dropping out and of failing to achieve literacy. The challenges of ensuring an appropriate and effective education for each student are significant, numerous, and complex; and they must include the involvement of families and communities, while recognizing local needs and limitations. At-risk students require uniquely designed interventions that meet family-related, socioeconomic, and individual needs in order to achieve literacy, graduate, and be prepared for transition from school to post-school options. Educational outcomes are outlined that articulate expectations for which schools and agencies should be held accountable. Post-high school outcomes are outlined that articulate long-range goals related to student growth, and promote full, independent citizenship. The current educational system is analyzed in terms of the following issues: (1) services; (2) role definition; (3) meaningful involvement; (4) staffing; (5) funding; and (6) evaluation. Objectives are presented based on the analysis of issues, and strategies for achieving the objectives are proposed. A list of definitions is appended. (FMW)

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MASTER PLAN

FOR SERVICES FOR STUDENTS AT RISK

FROM PREVENTION THROUGH REMEDIATION

As developed by the
Interagency Team
for the Development
of the Master Plan
for Services for Students
At Risk
Stevan J. Kukic, Chairman

August 19, 1988

Utah State Office of Education
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James R. Moss,
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of Public Instruction

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LETTER FROM THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

September 1, 1988

Fellow Utahns:

I am pleased to present this Master Plan for Services for Students At Risk. This Master Plan is both a culmination and a beginning. It is a culmination of many months of diligent work by an interagency team, which was coordinated by the State Office of Education's Services for At Risk Students Section. On behalf of all of us, I would like to thank the interagency team for its dedication and competence.

This Master Plan is also a beginning. With the structure that this Master Plan provides, we are all in a better position to work together to provide needed services for students with special needs. Our state will not have an effective educational program until all students in the state have an equitable opportunity to succeed. This Master Plan challenges us to develop, implement, and evaluate services to ensure that each student is provided with an effective and appropriate education tailored to meet his/her individual needs. I encourage your careful attention to this Master Plan and invite you to become a part of this commitment to provide each and all of Utah's students with the most effective and appropriate education possible.

Sincerely,

James R. Moss
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEVELOPMENT TEAM	i
LETTER FROM THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	v
STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE	1
INTRODUCTION	3
Dropout Defined	3
Literacy Defined	3
Student At Risk Defined	5
Contributing Conditions	5-6
STUDENT OUTCOMES	7
Educational Outcomes	7-8
Post-High School Outcomes	9
ANALYSIS OF THE SYSTEM	11
Definition of System Excellence	11
Current Status	12
Services	12
Role Definition	12
Meaningful Involvement	13
Staffing	13
Funding	13
Evaluation	13-14
RECOMMENDATIONS	15
Objectives and Proposed Strategies	15
Services	15-16
Role Definition	16
Coordination	16
Staffing	16
Funding	17
Evaluation	17
APPENDIX - DEFINITIONS	19
Dropout	19
Dropout Rate	19
Dropout Rate Formula	19-20
Literacy	21
Literacy Rate	21

STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE

For many children and their families, Utah is a wonderful place to live. Bolstered by a strong sense of community, Utah enjoys low rates of juvenile crime, substance abuse, and school violence compared to many parts of the country. However, for those youth who are involved in these activities, serious problems do exist.

Utah's pregnancy rate, youth suicide, and physical and sexual abuse of children are substantial problems. At least 25 percent of the students in Utah's schools, according to the Utah State Office of Education, are substantially below national norms in both reading and mathematics. It is estimated that in 1987, 20,000 12 to 17 year olds had severe or extreme substance abuse problems and were in need of treatment. These 20,000 students represent approximately 11 percent of the total population for this age group. Many more students are at risk for developing substance abuse problems, for juvenile crimes, and school violence.

INTRODUCTION

The Utah State Board of Education is dedicated to improving the effectiveness of services so that fewer students drop out and more students become literate, productive citizens. This master planning effort has resulted in definitions of dropout/dropout rate and literacy/literacy rate (See Appendix). For the purpose of this Master Plan, a dropout is defined as a pupil who leaves public school for any reason except death, before graduation or completion of a program of studies and without transferring to another public or private educational program. Literacy is defined as the mastery of skills needed to read, write, and compute, and the effective application of these skills in life situations.

School districts have the ultimate responsibility to collaborate with families, other agencies, and the community to ensure that each student receives an appropriate and effective education. These services may be provided directly by a school district through collaboration with other districts, agencies, families and/or businesses.

This Master Plan provides a structure which will facilitate the development of an appropriate and effective education system for all students, including those at risk. An appropriate and effective education enables each person to function successfully as an individual, to function successfully in society, and to become a contributing member of the community. It enables each person to pursue post-secondary education and/or training commensurate with his/her abilities and interests; to find and maintain employment situations that lead to economic security; and to attain a living situation which represents an independent lifestyle.

For an educational system to be deemed effective and appropriate for all students, it must:

1. *Promote student achievement of curricular goals;*

2. *Focus on students rather than on processes;*

3. *Ensure that it will prepare each student to participate meaningfully in society as a com petent, productive, caring, and responsible citizen;*

4. *Strive to raise each student to minimum levels of competence with regular and continuing progress towards those levels;*

5. *Ensure that each student will be assisted to achieve beyond the minimum levels as much as possible, and to find success in the acquisition of core competencies, social skills, vocational skills, and behavioral accountability that will permit him/her to function in the post-high school world;*

6. *Ensure that each student will be recognized and valued as an individual with differing needs and learning styles, and that each student's potential will be explored;*

7. *Ensure that each student will be treated with respect and that his/her rights will be honored;*

8. *Provide opportunities for growth and development (training) to enable educators to function optimally in this system;*

9. *Provide for parental involvement and parent training as needed to facilitate student progress; and*

10. *Devise a means of recognizing and rewarding*

(continued)

excellence at all levels, i.e., the instructional, the school, and the district level.

The challenges of ensuring an appropriate and effective education for each student are significant, numerous and complex. In order to meet these challenges, school districts must strive to:

1. *Fully involve families of students, local school and other agency staff, and the community; and*

2. *Design effective systems of instruction and support services, recognizing local diversity in terms of characteristics of the student population, needs of local staffs, business/industry climate, the availability of resources (fiscal, service, etc.), and limitations in terms of staff preparation, fiscal constraints, interagency cooperation, and state and federal support.*

***A Student At Risk** is any student who, because of his/her individual needs, requires some kind of uniquely designed intervention in order to achieve literacy, graduate, and be prepared for transition from school to post-school options. Without appropriate intervention, a student is at increased risk for failing to achieve commensurate with his/her ability, for truancy, and for dropping out. Without appropriate intervention, such a student may not be able to participate meaningfully in society as a competent, productive, caring, and responsible citizen.*

Certain conditions may contribute to a student being at risk. Some of these conditions are preventable. All of them must be considered at the earliest possible time in a student's life, with a focus on preventing or minimizing adverse effects through effective intervention efforts. These past or present conditions may be family related, socioeconomic, or intrinsic to the student.

They include, but are not limited to:

A. Family Related

Divorce/separation
Child of an alcohol or other drug abuser
Single parent family
Teenage parent
Death in family
Dysfunctional family management
Family illiteracy
Mobility
Physical/sexual/psychological abuse

B. Socio-Economic

Cultural difference
Ethnic difference
Religious difference
Racial difference
Gender difference
Poverty
Geographic location
Migrancy

C. Intrinsic to the Student

Chronic absenteeism and truancy
Chronic behavior problems
Chronic health problems
Chronic underachievement
Involvement with the court system
Giftedness/Creativity
Handicapping conditions
Lack of social competence and interaction skills
Limited English Proficiency
Low self esteem
Social/emotional immaturity
Suicide-prone
Teen pregnancy
Substance abuse

STUDENT OUTCOMES

In this section a set of Student Outcomes will be described. These Student Outcomes are of two types: educational outcomes and post-high school outcomes. Educational outcomes articulate expectations for which public schools and agencies should be held accountable. Post-high school outcomes are long-range statements related to student growth which promote full, independent citizenship.

This Master Plan for Services for Students At Risk is designed to facilitate the accomplishment of educational outcomes which will enable students to achieve post-high school outcomes. That is, identifying and teaching skills which enhance lifelong success and independence. Students may not achieve these outcomes unless they stay in school and achieve literacy.

Educational Outcomes

An appropriate and effective educational program ensures the development of academic, vocational, social, and personal competencies commensurate with each student's needs and abilities. Each student at risk will be provided with opportunities to develop and express creative interests and talents, and his/her school experience will cultivate a positive self-concept as well as positive values and attitudes.

The following are educational outcomes for students at risk:

1. *Demonstrate mastery of skills necessary to communicate needs and feelings effectively with others.*

2. *Demonstrate behaviors which indicate a positive attitude toward self and others,*

(continued)

including: productive work, good study habits, and effective social skills.

3. *Demonstrate mastery of functional life skills, including: survival, self-help, and productivity.*

4. *Demonstrate mastery of academic skills in appropriate curriculum areas, as outlined in the Elementary and Secondary Core Curriculum of the Utah State Board of Education. These areas include, but are not limited to: Arts, Information Technology, Science, Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, Responsible Healthy Lifestyles, Vocational Education, and Family Management.*

5. *Demonstrate mastery of vocational competencies in keeping with knowledge and skills normally required to carry out entry-level tasks of a specific occupation or cluster of occupations.*

6. *Demonstrate mastery of pre-employment skills, including but not limited to:*

   - *ability to identify career interests;*
   - *acknowledgment of selected career skills and attributes;*
   - *ability to identify training and employment options and opportunities; and*
   - *ability to seek employment, further education, or training.*

7. *Demonstrate mastery of skills needed to obtain, retain, and succeed at a job.*

8. *Demonstrate mastery of skills required for participation in appropriate recreational/ leisure-time activities.*

9. *Obtain a high school diploma or its equivalent.*

Post-High School Outcomes

1. *Each student will achieve the post-secondary options he/she desires including: continuing his/her education, entering job training, and/or finding and maintaining employment.*

2. *Each student will obtain sufficient income through employment and/or benefits to be as financially independent as possible.*

3. *Each student will participate in society by taking part in community organizations and in civic, social, and recreational activities to the fullest extent possible.*

4. *Each student will develop the self-help and independent living skills that contribute to a productive lifestyle and will participate in the life of the community to the fullest extent possible.*

ANALYSIS OF THE SYSTEM

Definition of System Excellence

In order to enable students at risk to achieve the above stated educational outcomes, a system of comprehensive services must be provided consistent with individual student needs. Such a system, which involves families, service agencies, and the business community, is traditionally not unified, but one in which each unit maintains its autonomy. In order to respond to the needs of students at risk, this system must unify toward a common purpose and goal:

- *Provide services that meet the needs of students and their families;*
- *Clearly define the roles of families, service agencies, and the business community;*
- *Ensure meaningful involvement through the coordination of services between agencies, families, and the business/ industry community;*
- *Develop and maintain qualified and adequately paid staff;*
- *Have adequate and equitable funding; and*
- *Track individual student progress and provide on-going information, evaluation, and intervention to improve fiscal accountability and program effectiveness.*

Current Status

What is the current status of the Utah system of services related to this definition of system excellence? The following section addresses this question.

Issue: **SERVICES**

- *Statewide early intervention services are available only for children with handicaps;*
- *Validated and demonstrated practices are not consistently implemented;*
- *Philosophies of service delivery vary between and within agencies;*
- *Services (in terms of intensity and type) are not uniformly responsive to individual student needs;*
- *Services between agencies are not well articulated;*
- *Services to families are not well developed;*
- *Social interaction skills are not directly taught; and*
- *Alternative programming is available in some, but not all, parts of the state.*

Issue: **ROLE DEFINITION**

Agencies

- *Internal agency roles are not clearly defined and perceptions differ about agency responsibilities; and*
- *Agency roles are not often clearly communicated among agencies and service recipients.*

Family

- *Family roles vary; and*
- *The relationship of the family to the service system is not clear.*

Business

- *The role of business ranges from no role, to concern, to strong involvement.*

Issue:
MEANINGFUL INVOLVEMENT

- *Agency/family involvement ranges from non-existent to meaningful;*
- *System-wide interaction and coordination are very limited;*
- *Agency-to-agency interaction and coordination range from non-existent to strong; and*
- *Agency-to-business interaction and coordination vary widely between and among businesses.*

Issue:
STAFFING

- *Pre-service programs are viewed as weak by agencies;*
- *There is a lack of qualified staff in some service areas;*
- *Inservice training tends to be limited in scope and frequency and varies significantly among program areas; and*
- *Front-line staff are uniformly underpaid.*

Issue:
FUNDING

- *Per pupil expenditures are among the lowest in the United States;*
- *The perceptions of the general public and service providers differ considerably;*
- *Alternative educational programs receive limited funding;*
- *Long-term funding needs are being deferred by the current fiscal crisis; and*
- *Funding decisions do not always reflect the needs of students at risk.*

Issue:
EVALUATION

- *Models for tracking student progress at pilot sites are in place but are not widely used;*
- *System-wide strategies for collecting outcome data on student progress are being developed;*

(Continued)

(Continued)
Issue:
EVALUATION

- *Consistent definitions of dropout, dropout rate, literacy, and literacy rate are not being employed; and*
- *Program improvement, fiscal accountability, and program effectiveness data are not uniformly collected and analyzed.*

RECOMMENDATIONS

Objectives and Proposed Strategies

As with any complex system change, when an issue is examined with great care and detail, new facets of the problem may emerge. Due to their dynamic status, the objectives may also change over time. Therefore, it is recognized that the strategies proposed here are somewhat general in nature. With more intense analysis the need for expansion, clarification, and refinement will surface along with the need for detailed tasks, responsibilities, and timelines.

The following are the objectives formulated relative to each of the currently identified issues, and the proposed strategies for achieving the objectives.

	Objective	Proposed Strategy
Issue: **SERVICES**	*Develop a continuum of alternative programs.*	*Develop a continuum with an interagency task force.*
	Develop a structure for employing validated practices.	*Review literature within and between agencies. Develop mechanisms for dissemination.*
	Develop a comprehensive plan for early childhood education.	*Develop a plan and present to governing boards of agencies.*
	Develop a definition and structure for the appropriate involvement and roles for families and the business community.	*Develop a definition and structure with families and business.*

(continued)

	Objective	Proposed Strategy
(Continued) *Issue:* **SERVICES**	*Identify and disseminate strategies for the prevention of at risk conditions through the provision of early intervention.*	*Present strategies at Annual At Risk Conference.*
Issue: **ROLE DEFINITION**	*Achieve agreement upon clearly defined roles, responsibilitites and timelines regarding service delivery.*	*Develop a multi-agency task force document.*
	Operationalize agreements into policies and procedures.	*Implement operational policies and procedures.*
	Develop a mechanism for providing information about services/roles to front-line service providers and families.	*Use a computerized data base.*
Issue: **COORDINATION**	*Develop inter-agency agreements which include programmatic and fiscal responsibilities.*	*Ensure collaboration of the Utah State Board of Education, the State Legislature, the governor, and other agencies.*
Issue: **STAFFING**	*Train school personnel, families, and service and business agencies to be more responsive to the needs of students at risk.*	*Develop a multi-agency consortium for inservice training.*

RECOMMENDATIONS

	Objective	Proposed Strategy
Issue: **FUNDING**	*Achieve adequate and equitable funding for school districts and service agencies.*	*Present outcome data to the legislature; market with the public.*
Issue: **EVALUATION**	*Define dropout and calculate the incidence.*	*Adopt the Master Plan definitions and calculate.*
	Define literacy and calculate the incidence.	*Adopt the Master Plan definitions and calculate.*
	Develop an effective student tracking system which identifies system as well as student difficulties.	*Survey school districts to identify established systems.*
	Annually collect and analyze data to assess the status of current services and identified outcomes to determine whether post-secondary outcomes are being or have been achieved.	*Consumer satisfaction survey of enrolled students, graduates, dropouts, parents, and businesses.*

The implementation of this Master Plan must be recognized as a statewide responsibility which includes the active involvement of students and their families, public agencies, and the business community. Annual implementation plans identifying specific tasks, responsibilities, and timelines for all involved are being developed and will be presented yearly to the Utah State Board of Education for its review and adoption.

DEFINITIONS

Dropout and Dropout Rate

The following definitions of dropout and dropout rate will be used in Utah's Master Plan for Services for Students At Risk:

Dropout

A dropout is a pupil who leaves public school for any reason except death, before graduation or completion of a program of studies and without transferring to another public or private educational program.

Dropout Rate

Dropout rate is the percentage of students under age 22 enrolled in grades 7 through 12 inclusive, who stop attending school prior to graduation from high school and whose academic records are not requested within 30 calendar days of leaving school by another public or private educational program.

Exclusions from the above may be met by either of the following conditions:

(a) Death; or
(b) Temporary absence (e.g., temporary suspension or a school-approved absence due to illness)

The dropout rate is calculated by:

1. *Tracking of individual students starting in 7th grade, or their enrollment in public school during grades 7-12 inclusive, yet under the age of 22, through graduation or completion of a recognized course of study. The starting date for each year is October 1.*

(Continued)

DEFINITIONS

2. *The formula for calculation is:*
   DO% = 1-(x/y)
   - where DO% is the Dropout Percentage,
   - where x = the number of students reported on the October 1 Utah State Office of Education Enrollment Report <u>minus</u> the number of students:

   a. *transferred to another district;*
   b. *reported as deceased;*
   c. *who graduated;*
   d. *who completed a program of studies as defined by an IEP, consistent within the definition.*

   - where y = the number of students reported on the October 1 Enrollment Report (of the current year) <u>plus</u> the number of move-in students from another district, consistent within the definition.

Assumptions

1. *All districts are following reporting procedures as developed by the Utah State Office of Education for annual October 1 Enrollment Report.*

2. *Within district transfers are accomplished as outlined in the definition.*

DEFINITIONS

Literacy and Literacy Rate

The following definitions of literacy and literacy rate will be used in Utah's Master Plan for Services for Students At Risk. These definitions are to be used with Utah's school population.

Literacy

Literacy is defined as the mastery of skills needed to read, write, and compute, and the effective application of these skills in life situations.

A student is defined as "literate" if by the end of each grade he/she has mastered core competencies in all Core Curriculum areas (Arts, Information Technology, Science, Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, Responsible Healthy Lifestyles, Vocational Education, and Family Management).

Literacy Rate

The literacy rate is the percent of students, per school/district/state, who have mastered the Core Curriculum by grade level.